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Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 2 June to 1 September 2017)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2327 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) until 15 December 2017 and requested me to report on the implementation of the mandate every 90 days. It covers political and security developments from 2 June to 1 September 2017, the humanitarian situation, and progress in the implementation of the Mission mandate. It also provides a review of progress made by the parties in ceasing hostilities, returning to the path of dialogue and achieving inclusiveness within the Government.

II. Political and economic developments

2. There has been minimal progress in the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (the peace agreement). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been leading efforts to hold a high-level revitalization forum in what it sees as a final attempt to bring the peace process back on track. Meanwhile, various other initiatives are now under way which are also aimed at finding a political solution to the conflict, including the national dialogue and an initiative by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, to reunify factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

3. To date, however, these initiatives have yet to show tangible progress towards reducing the conflict or enhancing implementation of the peace agreement. The Government has prioritized efforts towards reconciliation through the national dialogue and has stated its intent to hold elections within the timeline outlined in the peace agreement. Opposition figures outside the country remain reluctant to engage in the national dialogue, arguing that the conditions are not ripe for genuine dialogue, and the modalities for including the opposition and "estranged groups" in the IGAD process are still being discussed. Meanwhile, the economic situation remains dire and continues to fuel public frustration, despite some Government efforts to put in place fiscal austerity measures.

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National political developments

4. On 9 July, in a message to the nation on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of independence, the President, Salva Kiir, emphasized his Government's efforts to promote peace and security, recalled his unilateral ceasefire declaration and issued a general amnesty. He stressed that the peace agreement and the ongoing national dialogue were the only way forward to attain peace. However, neither the ceasefire nor the peace agreement have been broadly respected or genuinely implemented.

5. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission convened plenary meetings on 12 July and 24 August. The Commission's six technical working committees submitted status reports on progress in implementing each of the peace agreement's thematic chapters to inform plenary discussions. In particular, committee members called on the Government to expedite the enactment of a bill providing amendments required to align the Transitional Constitution of 2011 with the peace agreement. The bill was submitted by the National Constitutional Amendment Committee to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs on 13 April but is still under review. Meanwhile, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee started amending the relevant national security laws and conducted preliminary consultations on revisions to the Political Parties Act and the National Elections Act of 2012.

6. On 17 July, President Kiir replaced six members of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly linked to SPLM in Opposition under the former First Vice-President, Riek Machar, with new appointees allied to the faction of the First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai, further consolidating the latter's presence in the Government. On 14 and 27 July, Riek Machar announced the appointment of new governors for 9 of the 21 federal states that his faction has proposed.

7. The National Dialogue Steering Committee conducted plenary meetings from 29 May to 22 June. On 8 June, the plenary created 15 subcommittees to conduct thematic and local-level consultations. Two special delegations reached out to opposition leaders residing outside the country, including in Khartoum and Nairobi. The Steering Committee Co-Chair led a special delegation to reach out to Riek Machar on 28 June in South Africa, but they were unable to meet with him. Delegations also travelled to Khartoum, Addis Ababa and Nairobi to continue their outreach. From 3 to 28 July, the Steering Committee conducted a seminar on international lessons learned in managing dialogues for its members, with technical support provided by the United Nations and other partners. On 28 July, the Steering Committee announced preparations to commence subnational consultations in September.

8. On 15 June, the members of the voluntary civil society task force on the implementation of the peace agreement issued a common position on the national dialogue process in which they expressed concern that the process could be compromised by limitations to the freedom of expression, the non-participation of opposition groups, continuing hostilities, the composition and partiality of the Steering Committee, failure to release political detainees, and lack of confidence in the parties to the conflict. The task force called for the national dialogue to focus on national concerns, such as vision, identity and unity, security sector and economic reforms, historical grievances, distribution of natural resources, and governance.

9. Given the continuing lack of women's participation in the peace process, on 29 June a civil society group named the South Sudan Women's Monthly Forum issued a gender gap analysis of the implementation of the peace agreement. It highlighted the fact that the 25 per cent quota for women's participation in the executive had not been met and recommended that more women be appointed to key government positions.

Regional engagement

10. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development held its thirty-first extraordinary summit on South Sudan on 12 June in Ethiopia and resolved to convene a high-level revitalization forum of the parties to the peace agreement, including estranged groups, to restore a permanent ceasefire and implement the peace agreement. On 23 and 24 July, the IGAD Council of Ministers, at its meeting in Juba, noted the positive response of the Government to the establishment of the forum and welcomed the commitment by President Kiir to collaborate and implement the decisions of the 12 June summit. On 16 and 17 August, IGAD convened a meeting of experts in Ethiopia to provide an opportunity for independent South Sudanese who will not formally participate in the forum to make recommendations for the revitalization process.

11. On 16 June and 20 and 27 July, the President of Uganda facilitated three meetings between SPLM factions in Uganda in the context of the implementation of the 2015 Arusha Agreement on the reunification of SPLM. The pro-Taban Deng faction of SPLM in Opposition was present. SPLM in Opposition led by Riek Machar was invited to send representatives to the meetings, but declined the offer. On 27 July, SPLM in Government, the SPLM faction led by First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai, and a faction of the former detainees led by Rebecca Nyandeng Garang signed a declaration resolving to establish a working group to operationalize the implementation of the Arusha Agreement, and called upon Riek Machar and other SPLM factions to join the reunification process. On 27 July, the pro-Machar faction criticized the talks in Uganda as a "mockery" of the SPLM reunification process.

12. The African Union High Representative for South Sudan, the former President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré, visited Juba twice, from 22 to 25 June and from 27 August to 1 September. During the visits, he met senior government officials, including President Kiir, key officials involved with the national dialogue, members of the diplomatic community, and UNMISS to discuss the overall situation in South Sudan and the African Union's contribution to restoring peace and stability in the country.

Other political developments

13. On 11 July, the Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly appointed new leaders for the 25 standing committees of the Assembly, of which seven committee Chairs and eight Deputy Chairs are women. Seventeen Chairs and 17 Deputy Chairs were allocated to SPLM in Government, six Chairs and six Deputy Chairs to the pro-Taban Deng SPLM in Opposition, one Chair and two Deputy Chairs to the other political parties and one Chair to the SPLM leaders. The appointments resolved a prolonged impasse in the Assembly following disputed changes to the committee leadership made by the Speaker in March, which had largely paralysed parliamentary affairs for three months.

14. In response to the ongoing judicial strike called by the General Assembly of Justices and Judges in May, on 12 July, President Kiir removed 14 judges from office, invoking a constitutional provision that allows for the removal of judges for "misconduct" and other grounds based on the recommendation of the National Judicial Service Commission. Striking judges demanded adequate financial and logistical support to the judiciary, salary increment, and the resignation of the Chief Justice. A government committee established by President Kiir in April to look into the judges' grievances submitted its findings to the President in June, rejecting all demands.

Economic developments

15. South Sudan continues to face serious economic challenges. Government revenue remains limited, owing mainly to relatively low oil prices and low net oil production, currently at around 118,000 barrels per day, whereas it stood at 130,000 barrels per day in the previous quarter. Inflation and persistent salary backlogs have further weakened household purchasing power, compounded by the weakening of the South Sudanese pound against the United States dollar. The annual consumer price index increased 154.6 per cent from July 2016 to July 2017, mainly driven by high food prices. Agricultural production continues to be hampered by insecurity and displacement, particularly in the greater Equatoria region. On 28 August, Parliament adopted the national budget for the fiscal year 2017/18; it totals SSP 46.487 billion with amendments, which exceeds available resources by SSP 16.8 billion. During the deliberations, parliamentarians discussed the country's economic outlook, the lifting of the fuel subsidy, adjustment of tax rates and other sources of revenue. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development announced the formation of a secretariat to spearhead the process of designing and executing a three-year national development strategy aimed at stabilizing the economy.

III. Security situation

16. Despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by President Kiir in May and calls for all armed groups to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement, the security situation did not improve during the reporting period, and almost all areas of the country were affected by the conflict. Military operations continued in parts of greater Upper Nile and some areas of the Equatorias, while tensions persisted in the greater Bahr el-Ghazal region. On 29 August, the Minister of Defence was cited in local media warning that the general amnesty announced by the President was not "open ended" and on 31 August, in an interview with UNMISS Radio Miraya, he confirmed his official directives to grant rebel forces a 30-day ultimatum to declare their willingness to consider ceasefire arrangements or else face Government attacks.

Greater Upper Nile region

17. The security situation in greater Upper Nile remained volatile, with clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in Renk County, on 7 and 14 June in Babounge and Atham villages and on 5 July in Gostabun. In Manyo County, the SPLA and opposition forces clashed in Kola and Kuek towns on 13 June and in Kaka on 18, 20 and 26 July. SPLA operations to push further into opposition-held areas continued, with clashes between SPLA and SPLA in Opposition forces on 29 June in Mathiang causing civilian displacement. On 6 and 7 July, 25 humanitarian workers were relocated from Pagak because of insecurity in the area. Clashes continued as SPLA forces arrived in Maiwut and, on 8 August, both SPLA and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition confirmed to UNMISS that SPLA had captured Pagak on 6 August. However, the opposition reportedly managed to regain control over parts of Pagak on 10 August. Both sides remain present in the area of Pagak and both have since claimed to be in control of Pagak.

18. The security situation in Unity was tense, with reports of localized conflict and insecurity. UNMISS continued to receive reports of forced recruitment by the pro-Taban Deng SPLA in Opposition in Guit County, including attempts to forcibly recruit national humanitarian workers. On 22 June, SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA in

Opposition forces exchanged gunfire in Gear, Leer County. In Kuerguini, Guit County, UNMISS observed a military parade of the pro-Taban Deng SPLA in Opposition on 4 July, during which the Deputy Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs highlighted the Government's plan to reintegrate pro-Taban Deng SPLA in Opposition forces into SPLA. The SPLA Division IV Commander also reported the withdrawal of SPLA forces from Pilling, Leer County. Clashes between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition forces continued in Leer County, however.

19. In Jonglei, the security situation remained unstable. The SPLA Brigade Commander in Pibor reported that most of the SPLA soldiers stationed in Rate, Pochala County, had abandoned their barracks, owing to lack of food and salary arrears. On 13 June, SPLA soldiers denied a United Nations agency aircraft permission to take off from the Pochala airfield, citing grievances over the non-payment of salaries, and temporarily held the aircraft, crew and passengers, who were released on 14 June. The pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition Commander in Lankien claimed that, on 10 July, Government forces in Waat attacked Walgak in Akobo County but were reportedly pushed back by opposition forces.

Greater Equatoria region

20. The security situation in some areas of the Equatorias was tense, with reports of clashes between the SPLA and opposition forces, as well as the killing of civilians and ambushes along major roadways. In Eastern Equatoria, the situation was particularly tense around Torit, with confrontations between SPLA and the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition. On 8 June, a convoy of vehicles escorted by SPLA was ambushed, leading to the deaths of at least 18 civilians, including seven women, and SPLA soldiers. The pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack. On 13 June, armed men reportedly fired upon the vehicle of the Governor of Imatong on the Torit-Katire road. The following day, SPLA conducted a military operation against pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition elements south of Torit, reportedly causing civilian casualties. Further clashes were reported on 20 June.

21. In Central Equatoria, there were continued reports of clashes between the SPLA and opposition forces. On 29 June, a pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition official claimed that SPLA forces from Kaia clashed with opposition forces in Yoldu, Morobo County, resulting in civilian casualties. Insecurity along the roads also continued. On 7 June, armed men reportedly opened fire on a non-governmental organization vehicle along the Yei-Lainya road, injuring one person. On 10 June, three persons were killed and two others injured when armed men ambushed two commercial vehicles between Kenyi and Loka. On 13 June, an officer of the National Police Service was reportedly killed in an ambush on the Terakeka-Mingkaman road. Armed violence has continued to hamper free movement on the principal arteries connecting Juba to Bor and Juba to Pibor. On 26 August, an American journalist reportedly embedded with pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition forces was killed in clashes with SPLA in Kaia, Central Equatoria. Both sides have accused the other of initiating the fighting.

22. In Western Equatoria, localized insecurity continued, while the government of Gbudwe continued its efforts to integrate surrendered armed elements. On 2 June, local authorities reported that an armed group attacked the local police station in Yeri Payam, Mvolo County. On 13 June, two officers of the National Police Service were reportedly killed and two others injured when armed men attacked the police station in Maridi. There were also localized tensions in Yambio County, with reports of incidents at an internally displaced person camp in Bangasu and tensions between the Azande and Jur-Beri communities. On 29 June, one person was reportedly killed and two persons were abducted when armed men attacked members of the Jur-Beri

tribe in the area. On 3 July, six houses of members of the Azande community were burned in Yambio County, along the Bazungua road.

Greater Bahr el-Ghazal region

23. The security situation in greater Bahr el-Ghazal was also tense, with reports of intermittent clashes and security incidents involving Government forces and armed groups. Tensions continued between SPLA and opposition elements south of Wau. On 15 June, SPLA claimed to UNMISS that clashes had occurred between SPLA and opposition elements in the Bazia area. According to some civilians, SPLA clashed with the pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition in the Bagari area on 20 June. In Boro Medina in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, there were clashes between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA in Opposition forces on 5 and 6 July, resulting in at least 17 casualties on both sides, and SPLA subsequently claimed to have regained control of Boro Medina. In Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, SPLA clashed with an armed group near Aweil East and the border with the Sudan, on 12 June. UNMISS conducted a patrol to Baac County to follow up on alleged attacks on SPLA positions in Adol Payam on 28 June. County officials claimed that Misseriya nomads from the Sudan carried out the attack, resulting in civilian casualties.

24. In Lakes, several security incidents were reported. The Rumbek County Commissioner reportedly sustained minor injuries in an ambush in Rumbek Centre County on 14 June. In Rumbek East County, armed men reportedly robbed a senior SPLA member and three bodyguards along the road to Aduel Payam, Rumbek East County. Meanwhile, organized forces conducted forced disarmament in Rumbek town on 28 June. According to an official of Western Lakes, the disarmament process would be extended to cattle camps there.

Intercommunal conflict

25. In parallel to the broader national conflict, intercommunal tensions also affected the security environment in different areas of the country. Tensions between the Bor Dinka and Murle communities continued in Jonglei, despite a cessation of hostilities signed in May. On 15 July, Kolmerek was attacked by members of the Murle community, which left at least 31 persons killed, 20 injured, several children abducted and reportedly 7,000 cattle stolen. The violence produced significant levels of destruction, including the burning of several homes. An investigative commission established by First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai has yet to publish its findings.

26. In greater Bahr el-Ghazal, cycles of intercommunal violence escalated in June and July between the Apuk and Aguok communities of Gogrial and spilled over to parts of neighbouring Tonj, Wau and Aweil East. As a consequence, President Kiir on 17 July declared a three-month state of emergency in Gogrial and in some parts of Tonj, Wau and Aweil East. On 23 July, in Lakes, intercommunal violence among the Dinka subclans resulted in 19 civilian casualties.

IV. Humanitarian situation

27. Conflict and hunger continued to drive displacement: more than 3.9 million South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes, and 1.9 million internally displaced persons and over 2 million refugees have been hosted by the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda. As at 18 August, Uganda alone hosted more than 1 million South Sudanese refugees, the majority of them women and children. According to the revised inter-agency refugee response plan for South Sudan, led by the Office of

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the South Sudan refugee crisis has become the fastest growing refugee situation in the world.

28. Humanitarian needs continued to rise because of the impact of armed conflict, deteriorating economic conditions, disease, intercommunal violence and displacement in many parts of the country. Food insecurity reached unprecedented levels in South Sudan in June, and an estimated 6 million people (50 per cent of the population) were severely food insecure in June and July, including 1.7 million on the brink of famine. Although the mobilization of a large-scale multisectoral humanitarian response was able to halt the localized famine declared in February in Leer and Mayendit in Unity, 45,000 people were estimated to be facing catastrophic food insecurity (famine) in Koch, Leer and Mayendit Counties in Unity and also in Ayod County, Jonglei.

29. The population continues to be more susceptible to disease owing to the ongoing conflict and crisis. As the malaria season peaks, more than 1.3 million cases and nearly 2,500 related deaths have been reported since January 2017. Since June 2016, South Sudan has experienced the deadliest cholera outbreak since its independence. Cumulatively, 19,851 cholera cases, including 355 deaths (a case fatality rate of 1.8 per cent), were reported in 26 counties across South Sudan as at 13 August. An estimated 1,024 cases of measles, with 24 deaths, have been reported, mostly affecting children under 5.

30. In June and July, the numbers of reported incidents of humanitarian access restrictions were the highest in 2017, totalling 100 and 136 cases, respectively. Partners reported a substantial rise in incidents involving violence against personnel and assets, with 46 cases in June and 49 in July compared to 29 cases in May. Insecurity also disrupted aid operations and forced the relocation of at least 70 humanitarian workers from areas of Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria and Western Bahr el-Ghazal. Violence against aid workers and assets included break-ins, looting of humanitarian supplies and other assets and physical assault. At least 18 humanitarian compounds (offices, residences and warehouses) were broken into countrywide in June and July, resulting in the looting of humanitarian supplies, including more than 670 tons of food items. On 27 August, two United Nations Volunteers who had been detained for more than one week by opposition forces were released in Central Equatoria.

31. Despite the increasingly hostile operating environment, humanitarians scaled up their response through intensive negotiations and sustained advocacy regarding the need for free, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. In 2017, more than 3.8 million people have been reached so far with humanitarian and protection assistance. This includes 2.5 million people who received food assistance, more than 1 million people who accessed improved water sources, more than 100,000 children under 5 treated for severe malnutrition and 1,629,653 children between 6 and 9 months vaccinated against measles.

32. Funding shortfalls remained a challenge: the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017 is just 65 per cent funded, leaving a gap of $578 million.

V. Implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks

A. Protection of civilians

33. UNMISS continued to follow a three-tiered approach to the protection of civilians. Under the first tier, protection through dialogue and political engagement, my Special Representative exercised his good offices to engage national and local

authorities, and senior military officials. In those engagements, he stressed the Government's responsibility to protect civilians and the need for the parties to cease hostilities and ensure unhindered access for UNMISS and humanitarian actors. UNMISS also conducted 28 workshops at the subnational level on conflict management, reconciliation and social cohesion through which 1,658 participants were reached, some from UNMISS protection of civilians sites, including local government representatives, traditional leaders, youth and women.

34. In Kuacjok, UNMISS facilitated a local leadership dialogue to help to mitigate recurrent communal violence between the Apuk and Aguok communities in Gogrial. In Rumbek, UNMISS supported a follow-up conference to foster peaceful cross-border pastoral migration between Amadi, Gok, Eastern Lakes, Western Lakes and Terakeka from 14 to 18 August. In Yambio, UNMISS in collaboration with Gbudwe authorities implemented a series of community dialogues to ease tensions between the various ethnic groups.

35. Under the second tier, protection of civilians under threat of physical violence, as at 29 August, the Mission protected 212,969 internally displaced persons in six UNMISS protection of civilians sites. This includes 114,683 in Bentiu, 38,448 in Juba, 24,402 in Malakal, 651 in Melut, 1,940 in Bor and 32,845 in Wau. A temporary protection area in Leer, southern Unity, also continued to offer refuge to more than 1,000 displaced persons. A total of 614 persons suspected of having committed serious security incidents within the sites were detained in the UNMISS holding facilities in Juba, Malakal and Bentiu from January to July 2017. In order to reinforce the civilian character of the sites, UNMISS conducted sensitization campaigns in Bentiu, Malakal and Wau on relevant site regulations. On 28 July, 22 opposition soldiers breached the perimeter of the UNMISS Bentiu protection site. UNMISS subsequently met with the leaders of the displaced persons to ensure that the soldiers were escorted out of the protection site. Peacekeepers in Bentiu have also continued to intervene to prevent attempts at forced recruitment of civilians by armed groups immediately outside the sites; most recently, they rescued three abducted youths on 23 August.

36. UNMISS continued to focus on pre-empting, deterring and mitigating violence against civilians in areas beyond UNMISS protection of civilians sites. Efforts included continued proactive deployment and patrolling, including dismounted integrated patrols comprising military, police and civilian personnel to facilitate engagement with host communities and displaced persons. During the reporting period, 6,853 patrols were conducted. UNMISS continued regular patrols outside the protection of civilians sites in Juba, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and Wau. Despite the poor condition of the roads during the rainy season, UNMISS undertook significant outreach activities to the conflict-affected areas of Kajo-keji and Yei in Central Equatoria, Magwe in Eastern Equatoria, Raja and Deim Zubeir in Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Mayendit in Unity, Manyabol, Pochala and Jalle in Jonglei, and Kodok, Tonga and Aburoc in Upper Nile. UNMISS conducted a series of mounted patrols along the Juba-Nimule road in Central Equatoria in order to improve the security situation along the route. In July, UNMISS swiftly reinforced its base in Torit, Eastern Equatoria, in response to heightened insecurity.

37. In order to address incidents of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against displaced women and girls, UNMISS enhanced integrated and active patrolling in areas where women and girls were most at risk. In the protection of civilians sites in Bor and Bentiu, sensitization campaigns reminded women to adhere to the firewood patrols to avoid sexual assaults. The United Nations team supported the SPLA Taskforce on Sexual Violence in developing an action plan on sexual violence crime prevention and response. UNMISS also organized events in

the protection of civilians sites in Juba on prevention of sexual violence with 400 participants, 305 women and 95 men.

38. Under the third tier, establishment of a protective environment, UNMISS continued to engage with national and local authorities and civil society to create a more conducive environment for combating impunity for abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. In Bor and Malakal, UNMISS organized a series of workshops to hear views of representatives of women and youth on the minimum conditions for return and reintegration. In response to the interest in return expressed by displaced persons in Melut, UNMISS and humanitarian partners conducted consultations to explore possible solutions. In Wau, UNMISS engaged with local authorities to promote a protective environment outside the protection site that would allow displaced populations to return to their areas of origin.

39. Within the framework of the Global Open Days on Women, Peace and Security, UNMISS, with United Nations agencies, organized a national conference at which 136 women deliberated on key areas such as peace and security and participation of women in conflict resolution. UNMISS also continued to host sensitization workshops for community members and local and national actors on gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. UNMISS drew attention to the linkage between dowry and gender-based violence in addition to sensitizing members of the SPLM Youth League on the Mission's mandate and work on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.

40. UNMISS enhanced its communications outreach through multimedia content production. Radio Miraya added 10 hours of weekly programming focused on promoting dialogue and peace initiatives and combating hate speech.

B. Monitoring and investigating human rights

41. The human rights environment in South Sudan remained fragile, primarily because of the ongoing conflict in various parts of the country. Conflict-related violence continued, including a high level of sexual violence, as well as extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment, road ambushes, and intercommunal violence. During the reporting period, UNMISS recorded the killing of 110 civilians, including 39 women, and the wounding of 45 others, although the actual number of casualties is likely to be much higher. The Mission's ability to monitor and verify alleged human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence by militias, armed youth and elements of security forces, is greatly hampered by the continued insecurity and restrictions of movement to locations of alleged violations and of access to state institutions, including places of detention.

42. Allegations of human rights violations continued to be made mainly against SPLA and in some instances against armed opposition groups, including SPLM/A in Opposition. For instance, of the 26 cases of conflict-related sexual violence documented in June and July, 11 were attributed to SPLA and pro-Government forces, and 7 to SPLA in Opposition and its affiliated groups, the rest being attributed to unidentified perpetrators. In Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, UNMISS received information that, in order to avoid detaining suspects, police increasingly mediate minor criminal cases, thereby excluding the possibility of judicial review. On 27 June, two young men previously sentenced to death, and believed to be minors at the time of the committed crime, were executed in Juba, raising concerns about the continuing implementation of the death sentence in South Sudan, despite the stated moratorium on the death penalty. Physical conditions in many detention

centres and prisons remained poor, and cases of prolonged, arbitrary and proxy detention were common across the country.

43. The Special Tribunal formed by the General Court Martial held hearings, which started on 30 May, for the trial of 12 SPLA soldiers accused of committing crimes and human rights violations, including rape, murder, damage to property and theft, on 11 July 2016 at the Terrain Hotel compound in Juba. On 9 August, the Special Tribunal granted the prosecutor's application to allow victims unwilling or unable to travel to South Sudan to provide statements via videoconference. The court has also allowed the use of closed sessions to protect the identities of witnesses. Observers, including UNMISS, remain concerned about other aspects of the hearings, however, and are monitoring the proceedings to assess compliance with national and international human rights standards, including the right of victims to an effective remedy, the right to fair trial and respect for due process of the accused.

44. A challenging environment persists for media workers in South Sudan. On 7 June, the Media Authority publically disclosed that it had declined to accredit 20 foreign journalists for reportedly producing unsubstantiated reports or allegedly inciting hate. On 10 July, the National Security Services arrested the television Director of the South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation for allegedly having failed to provide live coverage of President Kiir's speech on the anniversary of independence. Released on 19 July, the Director was subsequently dismissed from his position. On 17 July, the South Sudan National Communication Authority blocked the websites of four news outlets for reportedly disseminating messages perceived as hostile by the Government. The decision was condemned by several civil society activists, and by national and international media organizations.

45. Incidents involving hate speech continued to threaten and incite violence. On 28 June and 4 July, the Bor Community Youth Association sent letters to a United Nations agency based in Bor, Jonglei, warning Equatorians working for non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies to immediately leave Bor or face consequences. In response, on 4 July, a document purporting to be a press release originating from the United States of Equatoria in the Republic of South Sudan characterized the threats as a declaration of war against Equatorians and urged displaced Bor Dinka within the Equatorias to leave. Condemnation by national authorities and civil society groups contributed to defuse tensions. In connection with the letters, 16 individuals were arrested and subsequently released. On 20 June, the Media Authority released a memorandum prompting media organizations to avoid the dissemination of statements that threaten, insult, ridicule and abuse the identity of a tribe or community and to avoid using derogatory words that have the potential to incite violence. Through regular engagements with authorities, civil society and journalists, UNMISS continued to promote greater understanding of permissible restrictions to freedom of expression so that the curbing of hate speech is not used as a pretext to deter political activism and suppress dissenting voices.

46. During the reporting period, 103 incidents of grave violations against children were reported. Of those, 61 incidents affecting 3,015 children (1,382 boys, 933 girls and 700 whose sex is unknown) were verified. These included incidents of killing and maiming, recruitment and use of children, and attacks on schools and hospitals. To date, 45 schools (37 verified and 8 unverified) remain occupied and are being used for military purposes. The United Nations continues to advocate at different levels for the armed actors to vacate the schools. In August 2017, as a result of the engagement of the country task force on monitoring and reporting with the Taban Deng faction of SPLA in Opposition in Jonglei, the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission verified reports of

recruitment and use of 313 boys associated with SPLM/A in Opposition aligned with Taban Deng Gai in Pibor, Jonglei. As part of its child protection mainstreaming, UNMISS conducted 36 training sessions on child protection for 1,374 participants (833 UNMISS personnel, 425 SPLA members, and 116 SPLA in Opposition members).

C. Creating the conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance

47. UNMISS continues to provide force protection for food delivery, convoys and other humanitarian activities. Patrols aimed at accessing areas where violence, displacement and human rights violations had been reported and where humanitarians were providing services continued to face frequent obstructions, however, despite continued actions by UNMISS to persist through roadblocks and other restrictions.

48. In response to heavy gunfire approximately 18 km from Bunj town on 6 and 11 July, an UNMISS quick reaction force was dispatched, and relocated 18 non-governmental organization staff to the UNMISS base. Also on 11 July, UNMISS relocated 13 humanitarian workers because of an exchange of fire between an armed group and SPLA soldiers near the UNMISS temporary operating base in Leer. In Pibor, UNMISS evacuated 13 members of a non-governmental organization from their compound when it was attacked on 12 July.

49. The United Nations Mine Action Service deployed 33 mine action teams to survey and clear roads, airstrips and helicopter landing sites to enable security and humanitarian access. During the reporting period, 1,345,612 m^2 were surveyed and released; a further 5,377 explosive hazards and 33,963 rounds of small arms ammunition were removed and destroyed. In Aburoc, Upper Nile, the Service conducted mine action awareness campaigns and surveyed over 30 km of road to facilitate movement by UNMISS and humanitarian actors to respond to the immediate needs of internally displaced persons.

D. Supporting the implementation of the peace agreement

50. UNMISS continued to host regular forums for international partners and the "Friends of South Sudan" group to support the work of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and align the positions of the international community prior to the Commission's plenary meetings. My Special Representative also continued to exercise his good offices to advocate for implementation of the peace agreement, including through regular meetings with the President and other national leaders in Juba, and in the field through regular interactions with state and local leadership.

51. UNMISS supported the operations of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism by providing force protection and logistical and administrative assistance to the Mechanism's monitoring and verification teams during their field visits to critical areas. UNMISS also provided support for the establishment of new monitoring and verification team sites at Bunj and Renk, raising the number of sites in South Sudan to 16. UNMISS is also monitoring progress towards the establishment of cantonment sites by participating in regular meetings of the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission and, on 15 June, the United Nations Mine Action Service completed the survey and clearance of the cantonment site in Juba identified by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission.

52. In support of the establishment of the Joint Integrated Police, UNMISS continued to work with the Joint Management Team comprising officers from the South Sudan National Police Service and the SPLM/A in Opposition faction led by First Vice-President Taban Deng Gai. On 17 June, 1,230 of the 1,253 Joint Integrated Police recruits designated by the ministerial order graduated at a ceremony presided over by President Kiir. Of the 1,230 graduated recruits, 917 successfully completed the training supported by the United Nations police, and 336 are currently undergoing remedial training.

53. On 20 and 21 July in Juba, almost two years after the Hybrid Court was first mandated, a delegation from the African Union Commission held the first meeting with the Government concerning its establishment. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel participated in the meeting at the invitation of the Acting Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission. The African Union Commission delegation and the Government agreed on a joint road map for the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan. A follow-up meeting was held from 8 to 11 August in Addis Ababa, during which representatives of the Government and the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission discussed and agreed, at the technical level, the content of the legal instruments for the establishment of the Hybrid Court. The Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat provided technical assistance during the meeting. The legal instruments will now be submitted for internal review and approval within the Government and the African Union Commission.

VI. Mission staffing and status of deployment

54. As at 29 August, the strength of UNMISS civilian personnel stood at 2,621, comprising 861 international staff members (including 223 female members representing 26 per cent), 1,372 national staff members (including 193 female staff members representing 14 per cent) and 388 United Nations Volunteers (including 121 female volunteers representing 31 per cent).

55. The police strength as at 29 August stood at 1,672 of the authorized 2,101 officers, including 614 individual police officers (with 107 female officers representing 17 per cent), 986 personnel in formed police units (with 127 female officers representing 13 per cent) and 72 corrections officers (with 20 female officers representing 28 per cent). The arrival of a Ghanaian formed police unit of 170 officers in Wau and the deployment of the all-female Rwandan formed police unit in Juba is expected in October/November.

56. The UNMISS troop strength stood at 12,817 military personnel, including 186 military liaison officers (with 8 female officers representing 4 per cent), 378 military staff officers (with 28 female officers representing 7 per cent) and 12,253 military contingent personnel (with 411 female officers representing 3 per cent). The 378-strong contingent of military engineers and medical staff from the United Kingdom completed its deployment in June. Following the arrival late in February of a 255-strong advance party of the incoming Bangladeshi infantry battalion in Wau, the main body of a 595-strong Bangladeshi battalion is now in the Mission. It is expected that a 200-strong Ghanaian contingent will be deployed to Aweil in October.

57. The regional protection force continued its deployment to South Sudan, which will proceed gradually over the coming months. The Bangladesh construction engineering company and the Nepalese high-readiness company are now in the Mission area, and an advance company of the Rwandan battalion arrived on 5 August. As the planning for the full deployment of the regional protection force

progresses, critical issues and decisions have yet to be resolved, including continued government resistance to the force's mandated role to support the protection of Juba International Airport.

58. UNMISS has intensified efforts to raise awareness of the United Nations standards of conduct and to implement the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, including the new approach outlined in his report of February 2017 (A/71/818). UNMISS continued to implement the three-pronged approach of prevention, enforcement and remedial action and sought to strengthen its enforcement efforts through an expanded pool of conduct and discipline focal points. UNMISS also partnered with the United Nations country team in revamping the Inter-Agency Task Force on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

VII. Violations of the status-of-forces agreement, international humanitarian law, and security of United Nations personnel

59. During the reporting period, UNMISS recorded 43 violations of the status-of-forces agreement, at least seven of which were incidents involving violations by the Government of its obligation to ensure the safety and security of UNMISS, both staff and property. Of particular concern were the explosion of a rocket-propelled grenade above the UNMISS base in Bor fired from a Government-controlled location; an incident in which SPLA soldiers pointed their weapons at and advanced towards UNMISS forces inside the weapon-free zone outside the UNMISS protection sites in Juba; the firing of bullets near the UNMISS temporary operating base in Leer on two occasions; the firing of a heavy machine gun by an SPLA soldier in close proximity to the UNMISS Tomping compound in Juba; and an incident in which a National Security Services officer pointed a gun at an UNMISS member in Bor.

60. Other violations recorded by UNMISS included 14 incidents involving restriction of movement affecting UNMISS operations; one incident involving disregard for the inviolability of UNMISS premises; two cases of interference with the implementation of the UNMISS mandate; and 10 cases of arrest and detention of UNMISS members, seven of whom were released after periods of detention ranging from one day to one week. One staff member who was arrested on 23 August is still detained in Juba. Two other staff members who were arrested in 2014 have never been charged and UNMISS has been denied access since 2015. Four incidents were also recorded involving violations of the obligation to facilitate entry into and departure from South Sudan by immigration officials at Juba International Airport.

61. An increasing number of UNMISS personnel and international contractors have been harassed, threatened with deportation and/or asked to pay visa fees. Furthermore, the Government continued to impose immigration procedures specific to UNMISS staff and international contractors contrary to what has been agreed in the status-of-forces agreement. This has caused disruptions and significant delays to UNMISS flight operations and frequent backlogs of personnel awaiting clearance to enter the country.

62. Four incidents involving SPLA in Opposition were recorded, three of which entailed violations of freedom of movement, while one involved disregard for the inviolability of UNMISS premises. The Mission continues to notify the Government of violations through notes verbales and at meetings with relevant officials. A monthly matrix of incidents is also shared with the Government.

63. UNMISS continues implementing a series of security risk management measures aimed at enhancing the safety and security of United Nations personnel, adopted by the security management team following the crisis of July 2016. Review and assessment of the security situation and the use of an alert state system continue, addressing the prevailing security situation in a timely manner.

64. Despite the Government's stated consent to the deployment of the regional protection force, authorities continue to reject any activities related to protection of the Juba airport, which they maintain would be an infringement of national sovereignty. The arrival of the Rwandan advance company of the regional protection force late in August at the Tomping base adjacent to the airport prompted the Government to ground all UNMISS flight operations in the country for a period of three days. The issue was resolved following engagement by my Special Representative, and the subsequent relocation of the company to the Mission's base at the United Nations House on the outskirts of Juba. However, on 28 August, a company of Nepalese peacekeepers on a rotation from Wau to Juba was also denied access to the Tomping base by SPLA. UNMISS leadership continues to engage with the Government, the National Security Services and military hierarchies to address these obstructions and to clarify the mandate of the regional protection force.

VIII. Financial aspects

65. The General Assembly, by its resolution 71/308 of 30 June 2017, appropriated the amount of $1,071,000,000 for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

66. As at 1 September 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMISS amount to $609.6 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amount to $4,188.9 million.

67. Reimbursement of troop and formed police unit costs has been made for the period up to 30 April 2017, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been partially made for the period up to 31 March 2017, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations and recommendations

68. Despite repeated calls from the international community, including the Security Council, there has been very limited progress made by the parties to cease hostilities and return to the path of dialogue and implementation of the peace agreement. As described in this report, hostilities have continued on the ground between SPLA and the Riek Machar faction of SPLA in Opposition, as well as other armed opposition groups. Of particular concern are the significant hostilities that have occurred in the Upper Nile region, where SPLA has undertaken major military offensives against opposition strongholds of strategic and symbolic significance. Conflict has also persisted between SPLA and various armed groups in Jonglei, greater Equatoria and greater Bahr el-Ghazal. This sustained level of conflict, well into the usually more calm rainy season, has had dire humanitarian consequences for civilians in the affected areas and disrupted life-saving humanitarian operations. The climate is also marked by abhorrent abuses of human rights, which continue unabated.

69. In the light of the ongoing fighting in different parts of the country, I urge the parties to honour their commitment to immediately cease hostilities and for the Government to restore the political freedoms necessary for peace. I call on the

Government to ensure respect for human rights and accountability for human rights violations, including through the establishment of all the transitional justice mechanisms under the peace agreement, and in this regard I am encouraged by the Government's willingness to engage with the African Union on the establishment of the court.

70. While I am encouraged by the increased engagement of IGAD towards revitalizing the peace agreement, questions remain over the commitment of the Government and the precise scope of the revitalization initiative. IGAD and Government officials have stressed that the revitalization initiative is designed to enhance the implementation of the peace agreement and is not a forum for renegotiation. Opposition leaders appear divided about the initiative, however, with some advocating a revision of the peace agreement to reflect the evolution and expansion of the conflict since the signing of the agreement, and others requesting a new process entirely outside the auspices of IGAD.

71. In parallel, the SPLM reunification talks in Uganda facilitated by President Museveni to recommit various SPLM factions to implementing the Arusha Agreement have been described by the participants as well as by IGAD as complementary to the IGAD revitalization initiative. Meanwhile, authorities within the Government of Kenya are consulting with opposition leaders with a view to a separate reconciliation initiative. The success of these various initiatives will depend on their ability to restore inclusivity in the implementation of the peace agreement and its core elements within a credible timeline, and coordination between regional and international partners will be essential to ensure their effectiveness.

72. While the National Dialogue Steering Committee has made efforts towards a more broadly representative and participatory dialogue process, key opposition leaders continue to voice scepticism about the credibility and inclusivity of the process. In public statements responding to requests of the Steering Committee leadership for meetings, Riek Machar and General Thomas Cirilo Swaka of the National Salvation Front Army welcomed a national dialogue process in principle, but stated that the current environment is not conducive to a genuine and participatory dialogue and that a negotiated peace process is needed first in order to end the ongoing violence. I welcome the announcement on 10 August of the release of 30 political detainees, and call on the Government to take further steps to ensure the release of remaining detainees and ensure that enabling conditions for a credible national dialogue are put in place. This includes enabling freedom of expression and of the media. I strongly condemn the continuing harassment and even killing of journalists as heinous acts which have no place in a democratic society.

73. I commend the efforts of UNMISS in the extensive consultations it has undertaken at the subnational and national level, with women representing a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including community and faith-based organizations, national and subnational parliaments and women's groups in UNMISS protection of civilians sites. I call upon the Mission to continue such dialogue, and I urge all partners to ensure that women, youth and elders continue to be part of the peace and political processes in South Sudan.

74. I must reiterate my calls on the Government to abide by its commitments to remove obstructions to UNMISS and humanitarian operations, including its consent to the full deployment of the regional protection force. While I was encouraged to see that the recent issues relating to the arrival of the Rwandan advance company were swiftly addressed, I remain concerned that some members of the Government continue to publicly question the intent of the force, and that these misunderstandings continue to result in significant obstructions. These actions,

along with continued movement restrictions and other violations of the status-of-forces agreement, as well as the shockingly high number of obstructions and incidents of harassment of humanitarian workers, undermine the ability of the United Nations and the international community to fulfil their mandates. I call on the Government to work with the United Nations and the humanitarian community in a spirit of partnership towards the common goal of bettering the lives of the people of South Sudan.

75. I wish to convey my sincere appreciation for the steadfast commitment of UNMISS military, police and civilian personnel, who, under the leadership of my Special Representative, David Shearer, continue to work courageously to protect hundreds of thousands of civilians, safeguard human rights, facilitate the work of humanitarians and promote an inclusive political process. I particularly thank the troop- and police-contributing countries that have provided much-needed uniformed personnel and assets to the Mission. I further commend the United Nations country team and non-governmental organization partners for their tremendous courage and sacrifice in providing vital humanitarian assistance to the population, under increasingly arduous and challenging conditions. I thank my Special Envoy, Nicholas Haysom, for his support to the peace process at the regional level and I commend the steadfast commitment of the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, President Festus Mogae, and the African Union High Representative, President Alpha Oumar Konaré, to address the plight of the civilian populations of South Sudan in partnership with the United Nations.

UNMISS
September 2017
SOUTH SUDAN
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
KENYA
UGANDA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
DEM REP OF THE CONGO
Juba
Malakal
Bentiu
Bor
Wau
Aweil
Abyei
Pibor
Yambio
Torit
Kapoeta
Lokichoggio
Lodwar
Moyale
Ed Damazin
Kadugli
Raga
Deim Zubeir
Kuacjok
Mayom
Parieng
Abiemnhom
Rumbek
Akobo
Nasser
Bunj
Melut
Umm Barat
Paloich
Penk
Kaya
Kaya Kerio
Lokichar
Lokitaung
Lodwar
Tambura
Ezo
Nadiangere
Maridi
Yei
Terakeka
Bundugiya
Lafon
Lowell
Torit
Kapoeta
Lokichoggio
Lodwar
Moyale
Ed Damazin
Kadugli
Raga
Deim Zubeir
Kuacjok
Mayom
Parieng
Abiemnhom
Rumbek
Akobo
Nasser
Bunj
Melut
Umm Barat
Paloich
Penk
Kaya
Kaya Kerio
Lokichar
Lokitaung
Lodwar
Tambura
Ezo
Nadiangere
Maridi
Yei
Terakeka
Bundugiya
Lafon
Lowell
Torit
Kapoeta
RPF (Juba)
BANGLADESH
NEPAL
RWANDA
National capital
State (wilayah) capital
Town
Major airport
International boundary
UNMISS operational northern limit*
State (wilayah) boundary
Sector boundary
Abyei region**
Main road
Railroad
* Final boundary between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.
** Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
0 100 200 km
0 100 mi
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)
Map No. 4258 Rev. 29 UNITED NATIONS
September 2017